ABSTRACT

An animated virtual creature is generated on a display such as a television set, in order to simulate a pet or to facilitate user interface functions. In one embodiment,

5   one or more signals corresponding to the program being watched are monitored. When certain events are detected based on this monitoring, the animated character is controlled in a manner that corresponds to the detected event. In another embodiment, the animated virtual

10   creature responds to program selections made by a user in a program recommendation system.